



PLAY. ADVOCATE. LIVE WELL.

PALSPARTANBURG.ORG

SUMMER 2025 EDITION

BIG

THINGS ARE HAPPENING
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Our Purpose

PAL improves health and wellness throughout Spartanburg County by creating an environment and culture that fosters physical activity and healthy eating.



A Letter From Our Executive Director

Friends,

We've got **BIG** news to share with you! And it wouldn't be possible without your support and partnership.

The first is that **Hub City Roots (the parent organization for Hub City Farmers Market) and PAL are merging** to create Spartanburg's one-stop-shop for health and wellness promotion in our community. PAL's name, team, and board of directors will remain in place while welcoming some of the Hub City Roots staff and board members to join us in our mission. Together we will create opportunities for active living and healthy eating for everyone in our community. PAL and Hub City Roots were both founded as a result of the same Healthy Spartanburg study over twenty years ago and so this partnership will make PAL even stronger. The addition of **Hub City Farmers Market, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary**, is a perfect compliment to the PAL Food Hub.

But that's not all, there's more REALLY **BIG** news!!

After four years of work and an incredible team effort from so many across our community and region, **PAL and our partners at the Saluda Grade Trails Conservancy have officially purchased the rail line that runs from Inman to just north of Saluda, NC!!!** This enormous effort means that the Saluda Grade Rail Trail is moving forward in a BIG way! Our next step is to have the rails and ties removed so that we can design a trail that builds community and improves health.

These **BIG** efforts reflect our holistic approach to creating a healthier, more sustainable community. By combining the power of trails and local food systems, PAL is not only enhancing quality of life today but laying the groundwork for a brighter, healthier tomorrow. And none of this would be possible without your partnership and support!

Laura Ringo

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

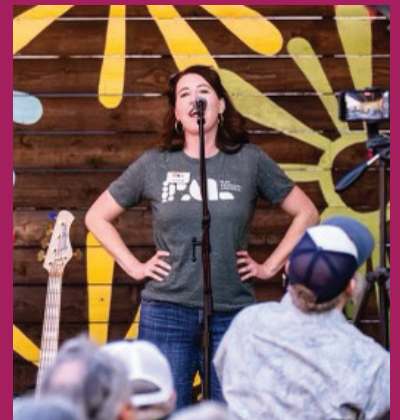
P.S.
Do you want to
know more about
the PAL Food Hub?



Check it out here



Laura Ringo
Executive Director



Mark your calendar & Meet us at the market!



WE'RE COOKING UP SOMETHING BIG!

PAL is proud to announce that starting this July, the Hub City Farmers Market will officially become a PAL program. This exciting new chapter strengthens our shared mission: to create a healthier, more connected Spartanburg through vibrant local food systems and increased access to fresh, healthy food.

To celebrate this strategic alignment and kick off our new Eat Local campaign, we're hosting a Launch Party on Friday, August 9 at the Hub City Farmers Market—and you're invited!

COME ENJOY:

Live music and local flavor

Fun give-aways

A chance to connect with farmers, neighbors, and community leaders



Whether you're a long-time market shopper or new to the scene, this is your moment to celebrate with us and take the first step in a community-wide movement to Eat Local, support local farmers, and build a stronger Spartanburg.

Thank you to the Mary Black Foundation, Spartanburg County Foundation and Valerie and Bill Barnet for supporting this merger process.

SALUDA GRADE RAIL LINE - *Making the Grade*



Over the last four years, PAL and partners, Upstate Forever and Conserving Carolina, worked diligently to acquire the Norfolk Southern rail line from Inman, SC to Zirconia, NC. Norfolk Southern calls this the W-Line but residents throughout the region refer to it as the Saluda Grade rail line, which was the steepest standard-gauge mainline railway grade in the US. PAL and partners have kept this name and branded the future rail-to-trail conversion the Saluda Grade Trail.

The South Carolina portion of the property acquisition was \$15.75MM. Thanks to the Spartanburg County legislative delegation \$15MM was secured through two state appropriations and was held by Spartanburg County government. The remaining \$750,000 came from a grant from the South Carolina Conservation Bank. Without this support, this project would not be a reality.

Now that acquisition is complete, PAL will solicit bids to remove the rail lines and other track material and begin the design and engineering process. PAL worked with Senator Lindsey Graham's office to secure a HUD Community Projects Funds grant for design, engineering and an initial phase of construction.

Are you interested in getting more involved in this project?! Contact our trails team at info@palspartanburg.org, and we can share upcoming opportunities.



ITINERARY: *Duncan Park*

Start at the trail's main entrance off Duncan Park Drive.

- Location: Park at the entrance off Duncan Park Drive. Or, add as an extension of The Rail Trail which connects via the dog park path to the intersection at Union Street into Duncan Park.
- Features: Families love Duncan Park for its large playground and peaceful lake. You can rent a kayak and paddle across the lake, or take a stroll along the "Invasives Walk" to learn about local invasive plant species. Coming soon: the Duncan Park Watershed Ecology Exhibit! Don't miss the new boardwalk and the resurfaced natural surface trail—an alternate scenic loop that brings you right back to where you started.
- Route: Follow the trail through Duncan Park, stopping along the way at the playground. When you reach the lake, visit the self-serve kayak rental kiosks. Scan the QR code to rent with your smartphone. All rentals include paddles, Personal Floatation Devices and safety whistles. Rentals options range from \$14.99 for one hour to \$39.99 for a full day. Hours are 6am to 8pm, 7 days a week.
- Dining and Refreshments: After you've explored the woods and the water, you'll be ready for a beverage and a snack! Head out of Duncan Park and cross over Union Street. Turn left by the Rail Tail Dog Park and turn right to connect onto the Mary Black Rail Trail. Once on the Rail Trail, travel .58 miles and then stop in to see our friends at the Flock Shop and enjoy some of their great menu items! Some other options include- Andrew's Atomic Dogs and P&J's street taco truck.

ITINERARY: *Hub City Hopper*

Start at the Mary Black Foundation Rail Trail

- Location: Access the trailhead near the intersection of East Henry Street and Union Street.
- Features: A scenic route for walkers and cyclists, leading directly into the Hub City Hopper extension

Traverse the Hub City Hopper Trail

- Route: Follow the trail along Union Street, transitioning onto Kennedy Street, and then onto South Converse Street where you run into the Chapman Cultural Center.

Visit the Chapman Cultural Center

- What to Do:

- Explore local art exhibits, performances and science exhibits.
- Visit the Spartanburg Art Museum or attend a theater or ballet production.
- Check out the Artists' Guild of Spartanburg gallery
- Visit the Spartanburg Science Center
- Dining and Refreshments: From the Chapman Cultural Center, cross St. John Street to Ciclops Cyderi and Brewing for a beverage or some bites. If it's a burger or wings you crave, you can also visit Rigsby's for their "Best Built Burgers." For a more elevated dining experience, The Kennedy offers Southern-inspired cuisine and craft cocktails in a stylish downtown setting.

ITINERARY: *River Birch Trail*

Start at the McCracken Middle School Trailhead

- Parking: Available off Sydnor Road
- Trailhead: Begins behind the school, descending a short hill to the trail

Midpoint: Willy Taco -

Because who doesn't love tacos & margs?

- Distance: Approximately 1 mile from the starting point
- Amenities: Restrooms and dining options

Endpoint: White's Mill Dam

- Distance: Another mile from Willy Taco
- Highlights: Picturesque dam, sandy area for relaxation, and a bench
- Tip: Great spot for a picnic or a peaceful break before heading back

Return: Backtrack to McCracken Middle School

- Total Distance: Approximately 4 miles round trip
- Time Estimate: 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on pace and stops

Optional Extension: Cottonwood Trail

- Connection: Accessible from the River Birch Trail
- Length: Approximately 1.25 miles
- Terrain: Natural surface, offering a more rustic hiking experience
- Features: Boardwalks over wetlands, diverse plant life, and a serene environment

Don't forget to share with us on social media using the hashtag #DoTheDan!

UPCOMING TRAILS:

Wildflower way

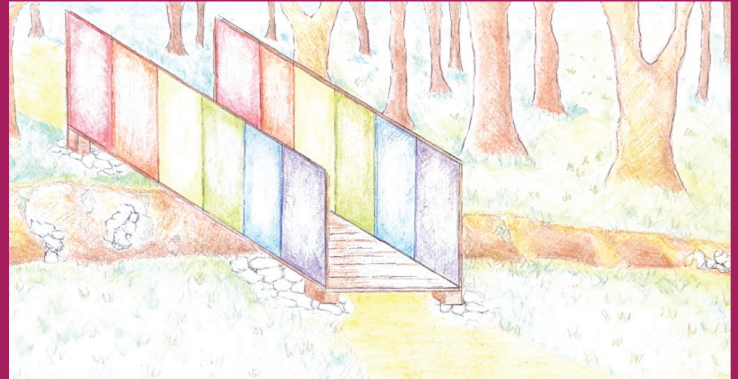


Wildflower Way is a paved, ADA accessible path within the Edward Griffin Preserve, owned by Spartanburg Area Conservancy. With limited access to this natural area for people with mobility limitations and strollers, this segment will open nature to our Spartanburg community.

The trail is being constructed in three phases. Phase 1 is complete, Phase 2 and the Rainbow Pet Bridge will be open by September 2025.

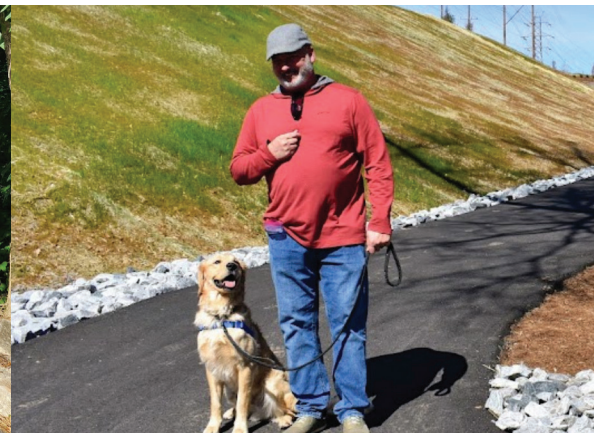
Thank YOU for helping make this project a reality. It would not happen without such generous support from the Spartanburg community!

Rainbow Pet Bridge



Within the Wildflower Way corridor, there is a bridge over a tributary leading to the Lawson's Fork Creek near Beechwood Drive. This bridge will be Spartanburg's Rainbow Bridge. The Rainbow Bridge, painted with rainbow colors, will be symbolic of the bridge that animals are said to cross when they pass from this life into heaven, eventually to be reunited with their owners one day.

Pet owners will be able to clip their pet's collar on the railings of the bridge to symbolize it's crossing of the Rainbow Bridge. This is a collaborative project between PAL and Hub City Animal Project.



Other Segments Coming This Year:

Extension of the Mary H. Wright Greenway - Connecting the existing Mary H. Wright Greenway to the Fairforest Creek corridor in the Southside of the City, includes the City Cemetery - .5 MI.

Beaumont Mill village to the Northside of the City - Along Daniel Morgan Ave., connecting two mill villages into Downtown - 1 MI.

A group of cyclists are shown in a race, leaning forward on their handlebars. They are wearing various team jerseys, including one with 'BLAZERS' and another with 'MU'. Spectators are visible on the right side of the road, behind a metal barrier.

What started as a single tent and a bold idea has grown into one of Spartanburg's most iconic nights—The Crit. For 20 years, the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System Criterium has brought the thrill of world-class cycling and the joy of community celebration to our streets. This year, nearly 6,000 people joined us downtown, with 110 tailgating tents lining the course for the best party of the year.

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PAL FOOD HUB: *Spartanburg's Online Farmers Market*

The PAL Food Hub is a Farm-To-People solution for connecting producers with local consumers. Food Hub customers can choose from a rotating selection of seasonal produce, meats and locally made products that are chock full of nutrients. We guarantee fresher produce that doesn't have to travel across the country – or across oceans – to reach your plate. You will taste the difference!

All the while, the PAL Food Hub is strengthening the local food system by providing a centralized, online process where buyers can purchase local food from different farmers. For farmers, it provides an additional market and reduces the marketing burden for them.

As advocates for community-based food systems, we understand the need for stronger local alternatives. The PAL Food Hub hopes to stand in the gap to strengthen our local supply – and demand – for our trusted, hometown farmers!

"The current food supply chain is costly, inefficient, and wasteful. By the time we get our produce, 1500 miles and 12 days after it's been picked, it has lost 50% of its nutrition and been sprayed with pesticides and/or injected with chemical additives. 67% of Americans don't trust the safety of the food they eat, and our health is the trade-off in Big Ag's harmful farming practices which focus on fast profit, not sustainability."

Source: FarmToPeople.com

PAL Food Hub FAQ



FREE DELIVERY!

When/Where do you deliver?

We offer FREE delivery within the Spartanburg City Limits! We hope to expand our delivery area in the near future, too.

What if I live outside of your delivery area?

You may pickup at the PAL office at 226 S. South Spring Street in Downtown Spartanburg on Thursday afternoon.

When should I place my order?

The Food Hub opens for ordering on Thursday at 8:30 am. Place your order for the following week from Thursday's opening until Monday at 2pm.

*Orders are due by 2pm Monday

How often does the Food Hub rotate food items?

Each week!! Our producers let us know each week what they will be harvesting and offering via the Food Hub.





PAL FOOD HUB: *Farmer Spotlight*



Simplea Produce

Simplea Produce sells butter lettuces, arugula, romaine and other hydroponic leafy greens grown in their state-of-the-art local greenhouse. Their efforts, though, serve a dual purpose: producing fresh foods and providing meaningful employment to people with disabilities.

The company is an affiliate of the Charles Lea Center, a local non-profit that offers disability programs tailored to foster independence, growth and inclusion. The Charles Lea Center is dedicated to helping adults with disabilities live independently through the cultivation of vital life skills. Simplea's team is made up of individuals with varying disabilities. Employees are trained in all aspects of the hydroponic growing process and are paid more than minimum wage for their work. The quality of their produce reflects their great care.

Simplea maintains a spray-free greenhouse, only using natural OMRI-certified products. They are also GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certified by the USDA so you can be assured that your produce is safe from harmful chemicals.

Order your Simplea lettuce through the PAL Food Hub. It will arrive fresher – and stay that way longer – than what you'll find at the big stores!



Walnut Grove Farm

Walnut Grove Farm is known for their Swangus™ cattle, a harmonized cross of the highly optimized and efficient Angus breed and the time-tested and maternal Brown Swiss and Braunvieh breeds. These Swiss breeds are known for their hardy nature and large muscular frames. When paired with renowned Angus genetics and traits, the result is a nurturing, docile, maternal, and well muscled animal. What started as an innovative pursuit for quality brood (adult mother) cows, has led to conceptualization and implementation of the Swangus breed. Additionally, the dairy influence gives the Swangus females improved milk production over traditional beef cows. This additional nourishment for newborns results in stronger and healthier calves that give the herd a strong foundation for many generations to come.

The Swangus, now native to Walnut Grove, SC, are acclaimed for their superb marbling in the beef. This renowned marbling makes for a tender and flavorful end product. From larger than average ribeyes to their top quality ground beef, you'll take the Swangus difference!



BIG THINGS ARE HAPPENING!

MEET UP & CLEAN UP
TRAIL STEWARDSHIP EVENT



DO the DAN
THE DANIEL MORGAN TRAIL SYSTEM

HELP PAL RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE BEAUTY OF OUR PARKS AND TRAILS

Join **PAL** For Trail Stewardship



SATURDAYS: 9AM - 11AM

SEPTEMBER 13, 2025

NOVEMBER 8, 2025

DECEMBER 13, 2025

Sign up at: [PALSPARTANBURG.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://palspartanburg.org/volunteer)



Trail Tuesdays with Mark

email:

mjohnsen@palspartanburg.org for more information

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! - YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!

Launch Day:

Farmers Market/ Eat Local - Saturday, Aug 9, 2025 - 8am - 12pm

Wildflower Way Ribbon Cutting - September 18, 2025

PAL Party - TBA

Jump Jam - TBA

Turkey Day 8k - November 27, 2025

Scan here to keep up!



STAFF HIGHLIGHT



Leigh MacDonald

Leigh joined the PAL staff last year as our Trails Development Director, coming from Spartanburg County's Planning and Development Department where she served for 7 years. Leigh says, "I am working to promote a healthier Spartanburg because healthy living makes a healthy mind! A healthy community fosters ingenuity and progress for future generations to thrive!" When not at the office, you'll find this Greensboro, NC native with her husband, toddler son and her doggies – often on the trail!

STAFF UPDATE



Megan Jarrett

Megan recently moved into the role of Food System Program Manager. You may recognize Megan as our Cooking Up Confidence instructor or as a vendor at the Hub City Farmers Market. Diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes as a teenager, Megan began her personal health journey looking toward food and farmers. She studied Agriculture at Clemson and Sustainable Food and Farming at the University of MA. With a well-rounded understanding of the agricultural world, she's milked dairy animals and taught high school agriculture. She and her husband bought their own farm in 2020 with Megan's goal of producing high-quality foods for her family. They raise or grow most of their family's food. Megan believes in food as medicine and wants to give people the skills they need to lead a healthier life.



Mark Johnsen

A familiar face to many, Mark Johnsen has both volunteered and contracted with PAL for trail beautification projects. Upon retiring from his business, RJ Rockers Brewing Company, Mark joined the PAL staff as our Trails Support Coordinator. Originally from Glen Rock, NJ, he moved to Spartanburg after 11 years in the field as an Army officer. Currently Mark also serves on the board of directors for two local non-profits: The Roo Crew and The Carpenters Table. Mark shares, "It really is inspiring to see the whole community come together to support everything PAL does, and I'm honored to be a part of it." Be sure to give Mark a high five when you see him on the trail!



Jenni Callahan

Jenni has managed Hub City Farmers' Market for nearly 4 years now, and she also fills the role of Food Access Coordinator, where she conducts outreach, assisting people in the community with applying for SNAP benefits. The child of a Marine, Jenni grew up all over the country but has spent most of her adult life in the Upstate. Jenni's interest in the local food system began with a passion for farmers' markets, and eventually she and her family started their own farm in 2013, where they raised vegetables, chickens, and goats. With nearly a decade of farming experience and eight years vending at Hub City Farmers' Market, she is passionate about supporting local farms and small businesses in the community. She considers Saturday mornings the highlight of her week, where she enjoys socializing with her co-workers, vendors, and shoppers as well as stocking up on goodies to take home to her five children! When she's not at work, Jenni loves spending time with her kids hiking, attending other markets, reading, and making goat milk soap. A true lover of agriculture and food systems, she brings experience and light with her to each and every market.



PARKING FOR PAL - *Snag A Spot!*

Are you headed to a Hub City Spartanburgers game this season? We have convenient, paid parking in our PAL office lot on Henry Street.

For a larger donation to PAL, you'll receive a season parking pass at the PAL office for events at Fifth/Third Park while supporting a great cause! To reserve yours, email Jodie Morrison at jmorrison@palspartanburg.org.

Individual parking rates are \$10 cash or Venmo for Monday to Thursday games and \$20 for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Snag an up-close parking spot and help support PAL's mission!

Thank You for Your Support!



PLAY. ADVOCATE. LIVE WELL.

PAL Staff *Teamwork Makes the Dream Work!*

Laura Ringo
Executive Director

Liz Evans
Development & Marketing Director

Leigh MacDonald
Trails Development Director

Ned Barrett
Trails Strategist

Nora Farrell
Grants Manager

Megan Jarrett
Food System Program Manager

Jenni Callahan
Farmer's Market Manager

Leith McLeod
Trails Project Manager

Mark Johnsen
Trail Support Coordinator

Jodie Morrison
Operations Coordinator

Dawn Wade
Bookkeeper

Ben Lea
Trails Community Outreach
Coordinator

Charlotte Verreault
Finance Management
Independent Contractor

Tim Carter
Trails & Park Construction
Independent Contractor

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